The Prisoner

by

Patrick McGoohan

[redacted]

1999
AVENUE OF
THE STARS
SUITE 2850
L.A. C A
90067-6082
310 553 5200
FAX
310 557 2211

698101

First Draft - (registered)

FADE IN

To a clear night sky. Filled with a galaxy of brilliant stars.

As seen from Planet Earth.

What appears to be a comet shoots across. Does not pass by. It slows. It hovers. It settles. Is still. Now a white ORB. Not starlike. Closer and more prominent than the stars.

It pulsates. Approaches us. Then accelerates away to the blue and white image of Earth beyond. Becoming a speck as it catapults into the blue.

OCEAN. DAY

Coming at us, quickly over water - ORB. It is white. Round. Texture like skin. Flexible. Mysterious. Powerful.

It zaps by toward the horizon. Slows. Rises. Hovers above as if seeking. Observing below -

A boat. A boat for exploration: Helicopter. Satellite dish. Powercraft ready for action astern. All of these and more.

We see the boat's name - ARK.

A vacant derrick hangs over the starboard side.

Nobody in sight.

ARK'S LABORATORY CABIN. DAY

SEEN through a porthole: ORB descending. Hovering at a distance. HEAR voices -

JOE (VO)
What does he think he's doing?

MAGGIE (VO)
How deep?

SVEN (VO)
35,852 feet. No one has been there before.

SEE THEM NOW

JOE - middle-aged black guy, American. MAGGIE - young, studious, Irish. SVEN - young, fit, from Norway.

They are mightily concerned.

Seated at a console with control panel in front of them. A screen to each. The latest technology in all areas. Speaking into microphone grilles:

MAGGIE
Talk to us, Tom!

JOE
If he goes any deeper, he'll never talk again.

SVEN
You know him. He sees something that catches his fancy and he goes into a trance.

JOE
Tom! Come in! Get the hell out of there. We can't see what you're doing. There's nothing but murk on the screen.
(to Maggie)
Oxygen?

MAGGIE
Three minutes thirty-eight seconds before he has to start back up.

SVEN
Tom! Tom! Are you OK? Talk to us baby.

HEARD ON SPEAKER. FAINT.

TOM'S VOICE
Hi gang. This is fascinating. I've got some time, haven't I?

MAGGIE
About three minutes, you nut!

JOE
We have bad visual feedback. And you don't send us a word. Get your ass up here.

SVEN
Are you crazy? Come home!

TOM'S VOICE
Three minutes. That's great. I've seen something. I'm going down.

JOE
There is no down. Hear me. That's it! You hallucinating or what? Scaring the hell out of us is what you're doing. Come on up!

TOM'S VOICE
You ought to see this. I'm going down.

PORTHOLE. ORB BEYOND

HEAR the raised alarmed voices of Joe, Maggie & Sven.

ORB

Very still. Then scudding away across the water. Descending into it.

OCEAN DEPTHS

A slim deep water craft of design never seen before. The name QUEST on its side. Searchlight in the nose.

In silhouette, it moves through tendrils of what appears to be vegetation.

QUEST. INT.

TOM YATES lies prone. Before him - miniature screens with gauges. Fuzzy now. Window to see through ahead, above, below, to the sides. Garbled voices from ARK coming through on his speaker. Riddled with static.

TOM
Can't hear what you're saying, guys. Guess we're out of touch. Be on my way up in a couple of minutes. Can't stand the static. Sorry. Switching you off.

Flicks a switch. Silence. Hits a couple of buttons.

TOM
Instruments haywire. Hope audio and camera are working on this thing for future reference.

He looks ahead.

WHAT HE SEES

Descending from a plateau of rock into a garden. A garden of luxurious awesome color. Weird shapes. Not known on earth.

TOM
Jeez! This is it. Everything we talked about. It's here. Don't want to say Garden of Eden. But what else is it? How about Last Chance Saloon? Hold on. There's something else.

His voice becoming garbled. Disoriented. But beyond the vegetation - entrance to a cave. Faint glow within.

TOM
Cave ahead. Some sort of light in there. Might be phosphorous. Taking a look.

He's gasping for breath.

QUEST. EXT.

Within the cave. Moving through pillars of rock. Light beyond is brighter.

QUEST. INT.

Tom - trying to remain conscious.

TOM
Energy low. Got to get up. Sorry. Next time. But what the hell is it?

Tries to turn the craft. But it continues on.

Nearer to the glow ahead. Now a shape. It appears to be a half-submerged ORB.

It pulsates as QUEST approaches.

Tom wrestles the steering.

QUEST moves inexorably forward.

ORB erupts up and away.

Tom - nearly unconscious. Watches it go.

TOM
Howdydoody.

THE DEEP

Through the water, from above, with impetus, the white arrow of a blur descends on QUEST. Hovers momentarily. The white blur is now clearly ORB.

It envelops QUEST.

SEAWATER. EXT. DAY

Bubbles rising.

Through them QUEST emerges, close to ARK, starboard side. The derrick above. Grappling arms lower, latch efficiently to QUEST. Raise it from water. Gently settle it on deck. The exit hatch opens.

Tom - prone within, regaining consciousness.

He gets out unsteadily. In familiar surroundings. Calls out -

TOM
Hi gang. Surprised I got back up? Where's the welcome?

SILENCE

He staggers against the cabin door. It lurches open. He holds onto the doorframe trying to clear his head.

TOM
You're not going to believe this -

SILENCE

LABORATORY CABIN. INT. DAY

Tom framed in the doorway. Ocean expanse behind him.

Sees the console. Three empty chairs. He moves in.

TOM
Where are you?

SILENCE. He opens door leading below deck. No steps down. Instead, a stone slab.

TOM
OK, guys. Joke over.

Goes to porthole far side. Looks out. Freezes at what he sees.

DRY LAND

A picturesque vista of quaint little houses. Some handsome larger structures - nice architecture - Italianate.

He closes his eyes in bewilderment. Opens them. Sees the same thing.

BOAT

He staggers out on deck. Moves to port side. Looks down.

The boat is at a concrete dock. Not moored. Apparently firmly affixed.

He gets over the side onto solid ground.

LANDING

Looks about. No sign of any living thing.

TOM
(yelling)
Joe! Maggie! Sven!

SILENCE

He moves ahead.

Sees a building to his left. Sign: HOTEL. Apparently abandoned. Window shutters closed. Unused chairs and tables stacked haphazardly. Front entrance nailed shut with criss-crossed boards.

He starts up a pathway toward other buildings.

SQUARE. EXT. DAY

Tom approaching. At first, it looks deserted - then he notices an elderly couple seated on a bench. Some distance away. The man leans over and says something to the woman. Then sits back in repose.

Tom calls -

TOM
Hi, there!

SILENCE.

They don't move. He does. Toward them. He has to pass behind an ornate wall until they are in view again. Thirty feet away. He greets the couple -

TOM
Good morning. Good afternoon. Whatever it is.

NO RESPONSE

He moves closer. Stops. Can't believe it - the couple are bronze sculptures. In real clothes.

He hears a noise. Turns -

The heads and shoulders of two men in tracksuits apparently floating effortlessly behind a hedge. Eyes front. Headphones. They might be in a trance.

At the end of the hedge, they appear in full view. On their feet, - not skates - but streamlined boots emitting self-propelling jets. Silently gliding. The fair-haired man - IVAN. The dark-haired, Oriental - LEE. They are both about 30 years of age.

Tom takes a step forward. Waves them to stop. They remove the headphones. Tom addresses Ivan.

TOM
Could you tell me where we are?

Ivan smiles. Raises an apologetic hand. Extracts small TRANSLATOR DEVICE from a pocket.

Hits a button. Speaks into the Translator.

IVAN
(in Russian)
Please repeat the question.

Hits another button -

TRANSLATOR
(in English)
Please repeat the question.

Ivan extends the Translator toward Tom. Lee between the two, looking from one to the other throughout the exchange.

TOM
Could you tell me where we are?

TRANSLATOR
(in Russian)
Could you tell me where we are?

IVAN
(in Russian)
Freedom Square.

TRANSLATOR
(in English)
Freedom Square.

TOM
No. I mean the name of this place.

TRANSLATOR
(in Russian)
No. I mean the name of this place.

IVAN
(in Russian)
The Village.

TRANSLATOR
(in English)
The Village.

TOM
Yes - the village.

TRANSLATOR
(in Russian)
Yes - the village.

IVAN
(in Russian)
That's what it's called.
'The Village.'

TRANSLATOR
(in English)
That's what it's called.
'The Village.'

In frustration, Tom is about to pursue the question when he hears a woman's voice singing -

'Oh, what a beautiful morning,
Oh, what a wonderful day... etc.'

He looks in the direction of the song. Starts away. As he goes -

TOM
Thanks.

Ivan smiles goodbye. Lee bows. They proceed about their business.

SQUARE. EXT. DAY

At the far end - a small quaint restaurant. Tables, colorful umbrellas. A Woman - HELGA, about 40, comfortably attractive, is preparing for early morning customers, happily singing.

Tom approaches, the jet-skaters diminishing beyond.

HELGA'S RESTAURANT

As he nears, Helga gives a welcoming smile, stops singing - but the song goes on. We realize she has been miming the words, and the source is from a tape recorder on a serving trolley nearby.

HELGA
Guten tag!

TOM
Good morning.

HELGA
Ah, yes. Good morning. What a beautiful day - for a stroll in the countryside. Would you like to drink some coffee?

She's proud of her schoolgirl English.

TOM
No. No coffee. Thank you. Where is this Village?

She is puzzled.

HELGA
The Village? Yes. It is in the countryside. You would, perhaps, like more to have - tea?

TOM
No tea. Which countryside?

HELGA
(not understanding)
Bitte?

TOM
Have you a telephone?

HELGA
Telephone? Oh yes. Yes, indeed. There -

She points to a phone booth across a narrow street. Twenty yards down. Two Africans occupy it - a man and woman. In traditional dress. The woman is talking on the phone. Unheard at that distance.

Tom, on the move -

TOM
Thank you.

HELGA
It was nothing. Auf Wiedersehen!

'Oh, what a beautiful morning...etc.' which has been playing throughout, is nearing its conclusion.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH. DAY

The Africans have moved away down an alley and are out of sight by the time Tom arrives.

He studies the contraption. Not your regular phone booth. Not enclosed. Open. With a protecting striped umbrella canopy.

No handset. Center - built-in speaker grille. Right of it - lengthy panel of National flags with name of country, each with a button. NIGERIAN is blinking.

Left of speaker grille - an old-fashioned faceless symbol of an operator - Headphones. Speaker on the chest. Larger button beneath. Tom presses. It blinks.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
(in African dialect)
Yes, Madam. Have you finished your call?

NIGERIAN blinking. He presses ENGLISH. It blinks. NIGERIAN goes out.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
(American accent)
Good morning. Can I help you?

TOM
What exchange is this?

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Village Extension 26, Sir.

TOM
No. The name of the area.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
You mean the area code?

TOM
No. I mean the area.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Hold the line and I'll put you through to Directory Enquiries.

TOM
Not necessary. I'd like to place a call to New York. Collect.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
New York? Which New York?

TOM
The USA New York.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Ah, that one. Certainly, Sir. What number?

TOM
212 555 1824.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Name, Sir?

TOM
Tom Yates.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Number?

TOM
I told you - 212 555 1824.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
No, Sir. Your number.

TOM
My phone number?

OPERATOR'S VOICE
No, Sir. Your personal number.

TOM
You've lost me.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Everyone has a number. Ah, so sorry - of course, you're Mr. Yates! The new arrival. Forgive me. Welcome. Let me see - your number is 6. We'll open an account. It will be charged to your dwelling - No. 6 Vista Street. Very nice. Lovely view. Only extra special people stay there -

TOM
(ready to kill)
Lady, charge it any way you want. Just put me through.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Certainly. Thanks for using Village Communications. Hold the line for International Operator.

Waiting, he looks around. A half-dozen joggers in full gear, trancelike, with headphones, trot by. Their gait unusual. Every third step appearing to float momentarily in the air.

Lower down, they come to traffic light at zebra crossing. It turns red. They stop. Jog in place.

Four men in black frockcoats with top hats carry coffin across. They enter a building the other side.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
International lines not available at this time. Adverse weather conditions. Would you care to try again later?

'Oh, what a beautiful morning' starts up again. Tom looks over his shoulder - Helga up the street, happily emoting.

TOM
Thanks a million. I'll try later.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Let's hope conditions improve. Have a nice day.

The Operator button blinks out.

TOM
Yeah. Have a nice day.

Leaves the phone booth. Looks around. Joggers still jog in place. Nothing crossing. Traffic light changes to green. They move on.

A bell tinkles. Where's the source?

Down narrow street, a sign - VILLAGE STORE.

Man in boater hat - SHOPKEEPER, at the open front door, sweeping the sidewalk.

Bell tinkles again. Man on a tricycle, AUBREY, pedals from the far side of the store and joins his friend, Shopkeeper. They exchange greetings.

Aubrey extracts bundle of newspapers from rack on handlebars. Shopkeeper takes it.

Tom moves in their direction. Is distracted by an echoing voice calling Muslims to morning prayer. Aubrey and the Shopkeeper stand silently in respect.

Tom looks back. Sees a tower at a distance. In it, at its peak, the figure of a man, arms raised toward Mecca. At its base, a dozen or so men, traditionally dressed, on mats, bowed in meditation.

Tom moves on to join Aubrey & Shopkeeper, still at respectful attention, although Aubrey distinctly winks at Tom. The prayer call ceases. The Shopkeeper with his bundle of newspapers, says -

SHOPKEEPER
Be seeing you.

and turns into the store, closing the door.

Aubrey, about 60, huge balding dome of a head. Attired in eccentric English County tweeds. Greets Tom with enthusiasm.

AUBREY
Such a pleasure to meet you. I've been reading all about it. Have you seen?
(he takes a newspaper from the rack)
Of course not. How silly of me. You've only just arrived and this is hot off the press.

He hands paper, with logo:

THE VILLAGE ECHO

still folded in half, to Tom who is astonished at what he sees.

AUBREY
You'll love it once you settle in. I've been here for years. Rocket scientist, you know. Aubrey's the name. Quite good at it I was. Must be saving me for something. Otherwise they wouldn't want me, would they? I'll bet you're pretty good yourself.

During this, Tom has seen the folded front page:

HEADLINE:

VIA SATELLITE: CREW OF EXPLORER SHIP 'ARK'
CONTINUE SEARCH FOR MISSING SCIENTIST

UNDERNEATH:

A photo of ARK at sea

BENEATH THAT - ANOTHER HEADLINE:

LOCAL SCOOP

Tom turns to the lower half of the page:

Sees a huge photograph of himself in The Village. Caption below it:

BUT HE IS SAFE AND WELL WITH US
OFFICIAL WELCOME PENDING

Aubrey, prattling on -

AUBREY
Any idea how you got here?

TOM
No.

AUBREY
I was so hoping you would. Then I'd know how I got here.

TOM
Where can I find a map?

AUBREY
A map?

TOM
Of the area.

AUBREY
This is the very place. Village Store. George will fix you up. Tell him I sent you. Lovely to meet you.
(mounting his tricycle)
Do hope we bump into each other again. Tally-ho and all that.

He happily pedals away, bell tinkling, calling "READ ALL ABOUT IT, READ ALL ABOUT IT!"

Tom enters the store.

VILLAGE STORE

Well supplied with great variety, GEORGE, about 50, happy with his belly, behind the counter.

GEORGE
Good morning.

TOM
Yes. Have you a map of this area?

GEORGE
Certainly, Sir.

He reaches to a high shelf behind him. Pulls down a pile of maps. Blows dust from the top.

GEORGE
Sorry. Don't get much demand for these.

Opening one and laying it before Tom.

MAP

It shows The Village and the confined outskirts of a small community. Nothing beyond.

TOM
I meant larger scale.

GEORGE
Don't follow you, Sir. All our maps are the same.

TOM & GEORGE

TOM
Nothing showing towns, highways, airport...?

GEORGE
Ah. The airport.

TOM
There's an airport near here?

GEORGE
Well, not too far. But you would have to go by train.

TOM
Where's the station?

GEORGE
It's quite a hike.

TOM
Taxi?

GEORGE
There is one. But it's in for service. No problem. I'd be happy to drive you.

TOM
You're kidding?

GEORGE
My pleasure.

STREET

A MINI-MOKE (four wheel low-slung vehicle. Basket-like body. Sun canopy affixed) emerges from behind the store. George driving. Tom beside him.

HELGA'S RESTAURANT

Aubrey seated at one of the tables. Helga serving him tea and English muffins. His tricycle nearby.

Mini-moke approaches. Slows. George leans out.

GEORGE
Helga! Be a darling and keep an eye on the store. Just dropping Number Six off at the station.

HELGA
Jah, jah. Be seeing you.

GEORGE
Auf Wiedersehen.

Helga & Aubrey wave and smile as the Mini-moke drives on.

MINI-MOKE. TRAVELLING

GEORGE
She won't have much to do. Thursday is a quiet day.

TOM
(puzzled)
It's Thursday?

GEORGE
Yes, Sir.
(a warm smile)
My day for German lessons with Helga.
(checks his watch)
We'll only just make it.

VILLAGE

Mini-moke sweeps by the outskirts into a country lane. The thing can move fast. Corners well on two wheels.

Either side of the lane - trees, bushes, fields. No distinguishable landmarks.

A TRAIN WHISTLE.

COUNTRY LANE

Mini-moke going faster. TRAIN WHISTLE again.

STATION

Not so much a station as a platform. An ancient classic engine with two carriages rests by a terminal end-of-the-line buffer. It whistles again. Puffs steam. Slowly begins to move.

HEAR - DISEMBODIED VOICE:

ALL ABOARD!

Mini-moke swings in alongside the platform. Tom jumps out, yelling "Thanks." Train gains speed. He sprints. Makes it aboard the rear carriage.

CARRIAGE. INT.

He falls into the nearest seat. He's alone. The carriage in showroom condition. Polished wood. Shining brass.

Bucolic countryside passing by. No dwellings.

Tom, looking out the window. Peace at last.

Then - a persistent SOUND: TIC - TIC - TIC.

Where is it? He rises. Sees it behind his seat - a clock.

It says 8:01. The second hand going - TIC - TIC - TIC.

TRAIN

At a distance. Puffing tranquilly across this gentle land.

CARRIAGE. INT.

Tom, now moving forward trying to find his way into the next carriage. But no connecting door. He pulls down a window. Looks out. Looks ahead. HEARS:

NEXT STOP - AIRPORT

Turns back. Sees clock. It says 8:02.

TIC - TIC - TIC.

ENGINE

Gently touching an end-of-the-line buffer at another platform similar to the one seen at the start of his journey.

PLATFORM

Tom steps down. Nobody there.

Sees a prominent sign:

AIRPORT

An arrow points to steps leading up a grassy knoll.

TRAIN WHISTLE

That disembodied voice again:

ALL ABOARD!

PLATFORM

Train already backing for return journey. Engine puffs by. Too far gone for him to see who's driving it. If anyone.

Tom mounts steps to airport.

KNOLL

Cautiously peers over crest. A helicopter, rotors gently turning. At rest on a plateau of grass. PILOT descending. Leaving door open.

Pilot carries cellular phone. Talks into it as he crosses to long low prefabricated building. AIRPORT sign on roof. He enters side door. Closes it.

Tom sprints to the helicopter.

HELICOPTER CABIN

He's settling in. Checks instruments. Knows them well. FUEL? - nearly full. Revs the engine.

HELICOPTER

Blades spinning fast. It lifts off.

HELICOPTER CABIN

Tom looking down - Pilot not in sight. He changes direction. Briefly follows the little train puffing below. Changes direction again.

HELGA'S RESTAURANT

Mini-moke parked outside. George is now seated at Aubrey's table sharing a muffin. Helga, also seated, pouring tea. All laughing at one of Aubrey's jokes. They hear a helicopter. Look up.

HELICOPTER

Veering in over trees.

HELGA'S RESTAURANT

All three rise. Cheerily wave.

HELICOPTER CABIN

Tom looking down. Seeing them. Gives ironic wave in return.

TOM
Auf Wiedersehen.

HELICOPTER

Moving into circular turn above Village.

HELICOPTER CABIN

Tom's last look at the place. There's a change since he saw it. More activity now:

A chessboard of huge dimension set up in the middle of the square. Nearby, men and women in line at a stall. Vendor dispensing black and white cloaks. A few, already cloaked, are moving into position on the chessboard.

Brass band to the side, tuning instruments. News crew, with camera, preparing.

Three or four wheelchairs pushed by white-coated attendants. People gathering as if to watch a world championship.

A couple of Mini-mokes whizzing here and there.

Then another, picking up a passenger from a STONE BOAT, at low tide. Starboard side - beach. Port side - firmly embedded to the 'dock.'

Tom recognizes it as the place where he 'landed' - Now no remains of the mock-up ARK. No QUEST.

The first building he saw after 'landing' - then apparently abandoned, boarded over, is now a busy place with the sign HAVEN HOTEL - tables set up with umbrellas. Party in progress. People having a whale of a time.

Glad to see the end of it all, he powers away.

HELICOPTER

Whirling by at maximum speed. Leaving The Village, passing over beach to open sea. It veers right to follow the coastline. But it doesn't.

It turns.

It turns back.

HELICOPTER CABIN

Tom working the controls. To no avail. The thing now has a mind of its own. Heading back. Village coming closer. He's going down. Can't do anything about it.

BEACH

Helicopter coming to rest on the sand.

HELICOPTER CABIN

He presses every button. Switches every switch. No reaction.

BEACH

Tom stepping down. When clear of the blades, they spin with unreal velocity and the machine hurtles up and away toward The Village beyond, hovers a moment, then sinks to rest on a landing pad beside a swimming pool, adjacent to the Stone Boat.

TOM

Alone. On the sand.

What next? He looks North, East, South, then West - surprise.

BEACH

On the sand - not seen as the helicopter landed. It wasn't there. Now it is - twenty feet away.

A car.

A low-slung sleek speedster. Open top. Ready for action. Licence plate reading: KAR.

KAR

Tom, suspiciously approaching. Sees key in ignition. Looks around. It's all beach. No one in sight. Merely the sound of festivities in the distant Village.

He leans in. Turns the key. Engine starts. He tries the steering. Front wheels respond.

BEACH

KAR, Tom at the wheel, hurtling by at full throttle, into a speck on the endless beach.

UNDERWATER

Deep. Bubble rising. Churning. Changing texture. Into ORB.

BEACH

KAR, coming from distant speck to huge.

SEAWATER

ORB erupting to surface. Scudding across toward land.

KAR. TRAVELLING

Tom once more on his way out. Then alarmed at what he sees:

BEACH

ORB, at some distance, moving into position. Lurking. He's headed directly at it.

KAR

He turns steering wheel left, right. No response. Shifts gears. No change.

Almost upon ORB, now quivering, when engine slows and KAR turns.

Turns back.

Tom allows it to happen. With scientific interest.

BEACH

ORB, ten feet behind, herds KAR across beach. Up a ramp. Onto a landing. Adjacent to dock below Village.

LANDING

KAR comes to rest. Engine dies. Tom looks behind. Sees ORB, task done, rise up, swoop across Freedom Square and descend beyond into the blue-green dome of a distant building as if absorbed within.

TOM

Getting out of KAR. Tired. Confused. Raging. Hears the blare of a brass band at full pitch. It's a celebration number.

LANDING

As if from nowhere, he's suddenly grabbed by a mass of cheering supporters and carried shoulder high into the Square.

SQUARE

He's set down. Besieged by cameras, reporters, "How do you like it here?" "Number Six, how was your trip?" "What's it like to be famous?" "Do you feel you can contribute?" "Have you seen your house yet?" "How about a one-on-one interview? Here's my card. Call me, I print nothing but the truth." Etc. etc.

TOM

Backing off. Evading the mob. He finds steps leading up to a terrace. Mounts them. Momentarily out of reach.

SQUARE

He sees: Chess game played with human pieces. Brass band, boater-hatted, in full flood of enthusiasm. Mass of people. A smattering of ethnic race and costume. George, Helga, Aubrey, Ivan, Lee are there. So too are the Joggers, the Undertakers - now carrying aloft the bench with bronze sculptures.

Everywhere, celebration. A crowd out of control. They've won the Super Bowl.

TOM

At the end of his tether, lets forth a PRIMEVAL SCREAM.

It echoes far and wide.

SQUARE

Everything stops. Ivan, suddenly swinging around, statue-like, dangerously recognizing a primitive challenge. All are frozen in position. Except Aubrey. Immobile, but through tight lips gets out -

AUBREY
That's not the way to do it, dear boy!

ANGLE

No movement. Apart from a Mini-moke threading its way through the still, silent crowd. Stopping close to Tom. A young woman driver, RUTH, leans out.

RUTH
Time to meet your host. Step aboard, if you don't mind.

Does he mind? What else is there? Anything for a change.

TOM
Lady, I'm all yours.

He gets into the thing. She drives back across the square. Crowd now animated again. Waving. Calling out - "Good luck" "Be seeing you" etc. Band playing "WHEN THE SAINTS COME MARCHING IN."

MINI-MOKE. TRAVELLING

TOM
Where is he? The host.

RUTH
Just the other side of
Freedom Square.

She indicates an elegant tall building with a blue-green dome.

TOM
Nice.

RUTH
We call it The Dome.

TOM
That figures.

They turn off the square into a cobbled street. THE DOME directly ahead.

RUTH
A word of advice?

TOM
Shoot!

RUTH
Please try not to be too
impatient.

TOM
(steaming within)
Impatient. Why should I be
impatient?

RUTH
I was when I first arrived.
It doesn't pay.

TOM
Thanks.

<u>THE DOME</u>

Mini-moke comes to stop at steps leading to front door. Tom gets out.

RUTH
Good luck!

She drives away.

He mounts steps two at a time. Door opens of its own accord. He storms through. Finds himself in -

PLUSH ROOM

Expansively furnished in gilt, satin and embroidery of the Louis IVth period. Ancestral paintings on the walls. Seated behind an ornate desk - an aristocratic gentleman of middle age - ANGELO. He wears frock coat and cravat. A copy of THE VILLAGE ECHO on the desk.

TOM
OK! What's the score?

Angelo is eyeing a fob watch.

ANGELO
Only two minutes late.
Welcome.

Marks ledger with quill pen.

TOM
Welcome, my ass!
(he grabs the newspaper. Jabs a finger at photo of ARK)
Where's my crew?

ANGELO
It's all in there.

TOM
You expect me to believe this bullshit?

ANGELO
Not for me to say. As you will discover, the...er...BS word does not apply.

TOM
Bullshit is perfect. Where's my crew?

ANGELO
(raising a delicate finger to his lips)
Ssh! It does sometimes happen with new arrivals - that I am mistaken for your host. I take it as a compliment.

Moves from desk toward a wall half-covered by damask curtains.

ANGELO
He is expecting you. Enjoy the meeting. Angelo is my name. Call me for future appointments - Line two. Always at your service. Please proceed, Number Six.

With a discreet gesture toward the curtains as they slide aside revealing double steel doors silently opening.

BEYOND

A vast area shrouded in darkness except for a small white glowing ORB. Center. Floor level.

TOM

Very still.

PLUSH ROOM

ANGELO
Do you wish to leave, Sir?

TOM
Not yet.

ANGELO
Good.

TOM
Great.

He goes through.

DOME ROOM

The steel doors hiss closed behind him.

Silence.

Tom stares at the ORB. Then a voice, reverberating from all directions.

VOICE
WELCOME, NUMBER SIX.

TOM
(yelling at the darkness)
I am not a number!

VOICE
NO -

The ORB begins to turn. The surroundings gradually glow with light. The ORB completes its turn - now a black-lined circular chair. Seated in it, holding a cane, a bearded man of many years.

THE MAN
- you are a free man.

Everything is now fully illuminated, revealing a domed ceiling of blue, reaching to the floor on all sides - superimposed on it, a vast map. Over that, a grid of latitude and longitude.

The feeling is of being inside a globe of the world.

THE MAN
Personally, I would be delighted to dispense with numbers. I've been trying to get rid of them for years.

Tom advances on him.

TOM
You're IT?

A half-circular console rises quickly from the floor between them, stopping him in his tracks.

TOM
You're the head man of this nightmare? You're The Host?

THE MAN
I prefer to be called Daniel.

TOM
OK, Danny Boy. Spill the beans! Number One - Where am I? Number Two - Where's my crew? Number Three - Who are you?

DANIEL
I'm a friend. And I apologize for the theatricals. Merely to persuade you to stay awhile. We need you. And our other friend -
(he points up)
has a sense of humor.

TOM
Big Brother of The Ball Game. What the hell is that thing? Hi-tech surveillance or what?

DANIEL
In a manner of speaking. He makes the rules. He watches over us.

Tom advances on him around the console.

TOM
(raging)
He? He! Rules! That orb?

DANIEL
The Orb!

TOM
What the blazes..?

He is drowned out by a penetrating voice filling the Dome:

VOICE
I WILL NOT BE BRIEFED, DEBRIEFED, OR NUMBERED.

Tom turns, sees:

World map replaced by huge image of a man about Tom's age, speaking in anger -

VOICE
MY LIFE IS MY OWN!

Voice cuts out. Image remains, replayed over and over.

Tom stares at it. From that, peers closely at Daniel. Then back again.

Daniel rises, walks toward the image.

DANIEL
(quoting to match the screen)
"I will not be briefed, debriefed, or numbered. My life is my own."

Tom turns, incredulous.

TOM
Don't tell me!

DANIEL
Oh, yes. That's me. Here. Long ago. I was once an angry young man. But now of an age when common sense overcomes passion and understanding begins. Your crew is safe and well. The boat in good hands. Relax.

He taps the cane. An easy chair pops out of the floor behind Tom.

DANIEL
We have much to discuss.

TOM
How about Adios Amigo?

He heads for the door. The cane again, bringing a new SOUND - Tom's own voice. LOUD. He swings around. Another image on the screen:

DOME SCREEN

It's himself. In an auditorium. He's onstage talking to an audience of distinguished scholars.

Behind him - a chart of ocean depths. Other charts depicting oil reserves, population, depletion of natural resources worldwide, areas of famine, poverty, etc.

TOM
...it can't be ignored. Watch for those who say it will sort itself out - they usually have personal gain in mind. They scoff at those who say pause, think, beware, prepare. Cranks, they call us. Not so. The answers are here.

AUDITORIUM

We A MAN sitting in the last row of seats raising his hand.

THE MAN
So your conclusion is that, in the end, those answers may lie in the deep?

TOM
They'll lie in deep something else if we don't pay attention.

Chuckles from the audience. Applause. Still behind him, we see THE MAN half-turn to his neighbor with an appreciative smile.

Is it Daniel?

DOME ROOM

Tom, moving in. Looking up at screen.

TOM
San Francisco. About a month ago.

Daniel. Joining him.

DANIEL
June 27, to be precise. Wouldn't have missed it for the world. And I wasn't disappointed.

TOM
That was you!

DANIEL
Followed your work for years. Always knew you were a dedicated man.

World map returns. Now punctuated with blinking lights in certain areas.

There are many. From Ireland to Israel to China to Moscow to India to Washington to wherever.

DANIEL
Many problems. Of one sort or another. Our problems.

Tom. Watching.

Daniel takes a book from under console. Steel doors open. He strolls toward them.

DANIEL
Sorry about all that nonsense you had to go through this morning. Wore me out watching it. As if it were me all over again. You must be starving. Let's walk. There'll be refreshments at the house.

He waits expectantly at the doors.

Tom. Still.

DANIEL
Mysteries of The Deep. By Thomas Yates.

He holds up the book.

DANIEL
Wrote this when you were twenty-two, didn't you? Caught my attention. How about it, Tom? Shall we go?

TOM
Daniel. Daniel what?

DANIEL
(chuckle)
Webster.

TOM
Daniel Webster?

DANIEL
Yep. There were two of us. The other guy wrote the dictionary.

A quiet look between them.

TOM
Straight talk?

DANIEL
Straight talk.

TOM
Let's go.

THE DOME

Tom and Daniel come out. Down the steps. Start across the Square.

SQUARE

Now more normal activity. A typical day in The Village. Eccentric. But not intruding.

CONVERSATION CONTINUES AS THEY EXIT THE DOME AND WALK.

DANIEL
Thomas Yates. Good name - Yates.

TOM
Not bad.

DANIEL
'I will arise and go now and go to Innisfree-'

TOM
'And a small cabin build there-'

DANIEL
'Of clay and wattles made -'

TOM
'Nine bean-rows will I have there -'

DANIEL
'A hive for the honeybee -'

TOM
'And live alone -'

DANIEL
'In the bee-loud glade -'

TOM
'And I shall have some peace there -'

DANIEL
'For peace comes dropping slow -'

TOM
'I feel it in the pavement -'

DANIEL
'And in the deep heart's core.' Yeats.

TOM
William Butler Yeats.

DANIEL
You're a different poet.

TOM
Why do you want me?

DANIEL
To save us.

TOM
This place?

DANIEL
The world.

TOM
Thanks.

DANIEL
No joke. What have you been doing all your life?

TOM
Trying to make sense of things.

DANIEL
Precisely. We have the same objective.

TOM
Then how come all this?

DANIEL
Everyone is here for a reason.

As they pass a bench with an old man sitting. Staring into space. Mumbling to himself.

TOM
He seems to have lost his.

DANIEL
Leading figure in Isothermatics. Nobel Prize. Unfortunately senility comes to us all.

TOM
Yep.

DANIEL
You could have made him live longer. Brain intact.

Tom slows. Daniel moves on. Turns a few paces away.

TOM
You know?

DANIEL
Some.

TOM
Another of my lectures?

DANIEL
Let's not insult each other's intelligence, Tom. You never touched on your research in that area publicly, did you?

They continue walking.

TOM
But you know.

DANIEL
Yes. But living forever is not my prime concern. God forbid. That's not it.

TOM
What is it? Tell me.

DANIEL
Not now.

TOM
(ironic)
When we live alone in the bee-loud glade?

DANIEL
After you've settled in.

TOM
You were in San Francisco. You got out?

DANIEL
Of what?

TOM
Here.

DANIEL
This place was abandoned after I left it in the old days. By reason of rebellion. Mine. You would understand. But I came back. Brought the old place to life again. And I have the freedom to go where I like and do what I want.

TOM
Then why didn't you come talk to me? Why bring me here?

DANIEL
Like all original thinkers, you are an endangered species. Let's say you're in protective custody.

TOM
Yeah?

DANIEL
Yes. You were hot. The bad guys were about to grab you. You had to be saved. Rescued. And here you are, safe and sound.

TOM
In protective custody?

DANIEL
Yep. How do you like it?

TOM'S HOUSE

They arrive outside a charming dwelling. A dangling sign - 6 - clearly displayed.

DANIEL
Sorry about the number. I've got rid of most of them.
(he unhooks the sign)
I imagine they left it [redacted] for sentimental reasons. This is the place they put me in when I was here before. You'll find it comfortable. Shower can play up a bit. Give it a thump and it usually responds. Any problems, call me. Line 2.

He extracts a key tag with dangling key from pants pocket. Tag marked - 6.

DANIEL
In case you feel the need of privacy.

Tom takes the key. Looks at the tag. Laughs.

DANIEL
What's the joke?

TOM
Nothing. Nothing is the joke.

DANIEL
Eat. Drink. Be merry. Tomorrow -

TOM
We have much to discuss.

DANIEL
Yes.

TOM
Be seeing you.

DANIEL
Definitely.

Departing down pathway toward Square. Glancing up. Tom follows his glance.

ORB benignly hovering above.

TOM
(calling after Daniel)
Thanks.

Daniel turns in his walk.

DANIEL
For what?

TOM
(indicating ORB. Ironic)
Protective Custody.

DANIEL
You're welcome.

He continues on. Tom watches ORB sink gently behind the Dome.

TOM'S HOUSE. EXT.

He tries front door. It opens without key. He goes in.

TOM'S HOUSE. INT.

Hallway. Nicely furnished. Warm. Inviting. An arch beyond. Music playing somewhere within.

Closes door. Goes through arch.

Adjacent room is exact replica of Laboratory Cabin on ARK. Three screens. Three chairs. Files. Reference papers on console.

Tom chuckles. No longer surprised. These guys are clever.

Screens flicker with static.

Music building in volume. Opera. He seeks the source. Goes through to a living room. Kitchen. Counter. Adjacent dining room. Fireplace. Chairs for comfort beside it. Music from an opera on the TV.

Table elegantly set up. Everything the best. Flowers. Cut glass. Selection of cold cuts. Cheese and rolls on the side. Bottle of water with logo: VILLAGE WELL.

He takes a roll. Puts hunk of cheese in it. Picks up bottle of water. Goes to window. Looks out on Square.

Daniel, at a distance, turns and waves to the window.

Tom raises bottle of water. Says 'Cheers' - Swigs from the neck of it.

Daniel continues on.

Tom munches on cheese roll.

Goes to monitors in mock-up 'Lab Room.' Presses buttons. No response. Nothing but static.

Hears behind him -

VOICE
The search for scientist
Thomas Yates has been
abandoned.

Tom goes back into living area. Opera on TV now replaced by man with microphone - INTERVIEWER.

INTERVIEWER
I'm here on deck of Mr.
Yates's well-known explorer
ship - ARK.

<u>WIDER ANGLE ON TV</u>

See ARK moored at wharf alongside trawlers. Cranes, warehouses. A commercial fishing harbor.

INTERVIEWER
And we have his crew. And
folks -

ANGLE

See Joe, Maggie, Sven. Together on deck. Dejected. Dishevelled. Grouped for the interview.

INTERVIEWER
- I know it's not the best time for you. But Mr. Yates's disappearance is of interest to many. How long did you search?

JOE
Four days.

ANGLE

Tom moving in toward the TV.

TOM
Jesus.

TV SCREEN

INTERVIEWER
Do you think he had any chance to survive?

MAGGIE
Oxygen was all gone.

SVEN
Can't believe he isn't still around. That guy.

INTERVIEWER
No trace of his deep water vessel?

JOE
Nothing.

INTERVIEWER
What's his legacy? What did we learn from this?

MAGGIE
You could learn not to ask questions like that.

SVEN
Yeah. Don't bury him.

INTERVIEWER
Sorry. I meant -

JOE
It's OK. We're just a bit - you know.

INTERVIEWER
Understandably.

He turns full face into camera as if addressing Tom.

INTERVIEWER
I think we should leave these good people to their private thoughts. Let me just say - the mystery continues.

His image instantly replaced by the opera in full flood.

ANGLE

Tom. Pondering. Voice behind him -

RUTH
Everything alright?

She stands by the open door to a bedroom. King-size bed beyond. She wears an apron as a maid. Looks cute. Carries a duster and a bucket of cleaning materials.

TOM
Hello again.

RUTH
Everything alright?

TOM
(playing the game)
Perfect.

RUTH
I was doing your bathroom.

TOM
Thank you.

RUTH
You haven't eaten much.

TOM
You know how it is.

RUTH
Do you like the place?

TOM
Perfect.

She moves familiarly to the kitchen. Returns the duster and cleaning materials to a closet.

RUTH
I'm here at your service.
Any complaints?

TOM
Not yet.

RUTH
Anything you need?

TOM
Sleep.

RUTH
I'll prepare the bed.

BEDROOM

She comes in. Efficiently turns back the sheets. Fluffs the pillows.

Tom follows. Water and cheese roll to hand. Watches her at work.

RUTH
Everything will be alright.

TOM
Yep.

He lies down. Above the covers.

RUTH
Want me to tuck you in?

TOM
No thank you.

RUTH
Anything else?

TOM
What's your name?

Fatigue claiming him.

RUTH
Ruth.

TOM
You know mine. Looks like everyone here knows mine.

RUTH
(closing the blinds)
That's the way it is. Anything else you need?

TOM
Nope.

RUTH
I'm on line 7.

TOM
Lucky number.

RUTH
Maybe.

He chuckles at something in his tired head. Eyes beginning to close.

She removes the bottle of water and roll from his drooping hands. Places them on bedside table.

RUTH
Goodnight sweet prince.

Gently closing the bedroom door.

TOM
And -

RUTH
Flights of angels.

TOM
What?

RUTH
Sing thee to thy rest.

Door closes. She's gone. He chuckles again at a private thought. Eyelids droop.

He sleeps.

CONTROL ROOM

See the very end of previous scene on a large screen. Ever closer on Tom asleep.

Watching him, a handsome man of 45 or so - STEVEN. Formally dressed in black frock coat. He smiles in approval. Walks thoughtfully across the room revealing -

High-tech equipment of all sorts. Banks of monitors with attendants. Glass-enclosed LAB: White-coated men and women at work within.

In a corner, a booth, also surrounded by glass. It holds three telephone operators. Above each, half a dozen different countries listed with adjoining buttons, some alight, blinking. Hear the murmur of their voices, various languages, as they take and return calls.

Three Supervisors move about, checking here and there. Altogether a subdued, energetic efficiency.

Steven looks at his watch. Moves briskly into the Lab. Speaks to a white-coated technician who gives him two pages of printed paper.

STEVEN
The latest?

TECHNICIAN
The latest.

Steven quickly glances at them.

STEVEN
Good.

Folds pages. Puts them in an inside pocket, dons a top hat and goes purposefully to a pair of steel doors. They open of their own accord.

He walks into a dark corridor. Doors close.

STONE BOAT. EXT. NIGHT

Full tide. Full moon. Water reflecting it.

Silhouette figure of a man enters foreground. He steps onto stone deck. Goes through deckhouse to far side. Starboard side.

SILHOUETTE: REVEALED AS TOM

Village behind him now. Street lights. Windows aglow. Idyllic.

TOM

Deep in thought. Looking down at water from which he 'landed.' The moon beyond, ORB-shaped. He hears clip-clop of horses' hooves. Turns. Sees -

ROAD ADJACENT TO STONE BOAT

A funeral cortege. Horse-drawn hearse. The hearse stylish. Lanterns on each corner. Flowers galore. Top-hatted, black-coated UNDERTAKERS sleek as the horses.

The ensemble is heading past boat to HAVEN HOTEL beyond.

Steven detaches himself from group of mourners following hearse. Walks toward the boat. Passing Ivan who is waiting and bowing in reverence.

STEVEN
Are they ready?

Ivan nods.

STEVEN
Are you ready?

Ivan smiles.

STEVEN
Good.

Ivan skates away.

Steven enters Stone Boat. Joining Tom, starboard side.

STONE BOAT

STEVEN
Many apologies.

TOM
For what?

STEVEN
(gesturing at the departing hearse)
Not offering you a ride.

TOM
That's very good.

STEVEN
Sorry. Joke. Lame joke. I'm given to them sometimes.

TOM
I'm not above them myself.

STEVEN
The main thing is - did you have a good rest?

TOM
I feel like a new man.

STEVEN
Good. Steven is the name. Daniel's opposite number. Usually we greet new arrivals together. Welcome.

He holds out a hand. Tom takes it. Shakes it.

TOM
(ironic)
Hi, Steven. Daniel showed me a few things. I could grow to like it here.

STEVEN
~~Excellent. Apologies again.~~ I was detained by reason of attendance at a Memorial Service for our passing friend.

Looks off at funeral cortege, going in the distance into darkness beyond HAVEN HOTEL.

STEVEN
Unique mind he had. You would have loved him. Died young. Eighty-two. Anyway. Are you settling in alright? That's the main thing. Any problems with Ruth?

TOM
Not yet.

STEVEN
She's a good girl. But keep an eye on her.

TOM
I'll do that.

Steven takes the two pages from [redacted] pocket, [redacted] Hands them to Tom.

STEVEN
These hadn't arrived at the time you met Daniel. I think you'll find them interesting. The rest are up at the house. See what you think.

TOM
OK. I'll check them out.

STEVEN
Good. Got to run. Session to attend. Hectic life. Any problems, call me. Line 3.

TOM
Got it. Line 3.

STEVEN
Good to meet you, Thomas. Have fun.

TOM
I will. Nice to meet you too, Steven.

Steven, waving, on the move, smartly walking into Village.

TOM

Alone.

Looks at first two lines on page one of Steven's notes. Then, grim, turns abruptly.

TOM'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT

He enters. Lights already on. Dining table newly set up. Cheerily burning logs in the fireplace. Soft music playing.

Tom, in anger, ignores it all. Grabs console phone. Beside it, suddenly notices a file not there before. Red cover.

Clearly marked - ANTI-AGING RESEARCH.

Puts down phone. Opens file. Quickly compares two pages given him by Steven with end pages of file. Curses to himself. Slams down file. Picks up phone again. Stabs button 2.

Instantly -

ANGELO'S VOICE
Angelo here. Yes, Mr. Yates?

TOM
Get me that straight-talkin' man.

ANGELO
Which one, sir?

TOM
Daniel! Dammit! Daniel.

ANGELO
Mr. Daniel is occupied at this time. I feel sure Mr. Steven is available. I'll send someone to guide you to him.

Phone cuts out. Immediately LOUD KNOCK on front door.

Tom opens it.

TOM'S HOUSE. EXT. NIGHT

Lee standing there. Smiling. On his jet skates. He holds up TRANSLATOR DEVICE which says -

TRANSLATOR
Mr. Steven awaits. Follow me.

He zaps away at unreal speed to far side of Square. To a dark archway. He stands there. Waiting. Gesturing welcome.

TOM

Slamming front door shut behind him.

SQUARE

From above. Seeing Tom walk through Village evening activities.

ARCHWAY

He arrives. Lee scoots into blackness within. He disappears.

Then -

VOICE
This way.

Within the archway, two antique coach lamps light up either side of a magnificently carved door. Opening of its own accord.

Tom goes through.

ANTE-ROOM

Dark in there. But beyond, two other doors open of their own accord. He strides into -

ART GALLERY

Walls covered with collection of weird abstract paintings. Mixed with standing sculptures. Classic busts on pedestals.

A gathering of two dozen or so, men and women, various ages, races, in Mao-type jackets.

They squat on the carpet, legs crossed, hands in repose. Eyes shut. Deep meditation.

Facing them, on a dais, also in Mao jacket, similarly in meditation, eyes closed - Steven.

Behind him, on the same level, Ivan, stripped to his muscular waist, as Cantor, leading the group in a mantra.

Powerful murmuring sound pervades. Tom, ready to explode, is stopped in his tracks.

STEVEN
(eyes closed,
whispers)
Give us a moment, Thomas.

Tom waits.

The mantra increases in volume. In power. Finishing with a great exhalation of breath by the assembly. Then eyes open. Looks exchanged. Happy people. People fulfilled.

STEVEN
Thank you. That was good. Very good. I have matters to discuss with our latest recruit.
(gestures toward Tom; then continues addressing group)
Bathe now. Be clean. Be pure. Body and mind. Pure. Clean. I shall be with you in a little while.

The group rises, bowing to Steven. Then leaving discreetly through two doors in the rear wall. Men one side. Women the other. They are gone.

TOM & STEVEN

Steven, now not in the least trancelike. Urbane.

STEVEN
How do you like it? My private art collection? Good place to relax. Contemplate. Meditate.

TOM
Live forever?

STEVEN
You catch on very quickly. Not forever perhaps. But with your help, certainly another hundred years or so. Are you going to play ball? What say you?

TOM

Holding the two pages.

TOM
This stuff and the stuff at my shack up there is all private. Never released. I would never let it out. How did you get your hands on it?

STEVEN
(smiling)
Private, you say? Nothing's private. Don't be naive, Thomas. You are too intelligent for that. That's why I need you.

TOM
To make your gang live longer?

Unseen by Tom, Lee and ANOTHER MAN very quietly carry in a sculpture of a White Knight on a horse, his lance in the charge position. Gently, they place the sculpture behind Tom's back, and stand waiting.

Steven in no way acknowledges their presence.

STEVEN
Not a gang, Thomas. A careful selection of exceptional people. And with your help we can save the world.

TOM
For what?

STEVEN
Peace.

TOM
Domination?

STEVEN
Guidance. Faith, Hope, -

TOM
And Charity?

STEVEN
The charity to take people without direction and show them the way.

TOM
To where? Who are you? Adolf Hitler?

STEVEN
Also a great visionary.

TOM
One of your jokes?

STEVEN
No joke. But I could be your ticket to freedom.

TOM
Thanks.

He spins on his heel to leave. Sees what is behind him. Agilely steps aside, but his turn was so quick that he can't avoid being slightly nicked on a thigh by the White Knight's lance.

Steven, in rage, explodes at Lee and his helper -

STEVEN
Fools! Damn fools! Can't you be more careful?

LEE
(in perfect English)
Sorry, Steven. We weren't sure where you wanted it put.

STEVEN
My apologies, Thomas. Accidents will happen.

TOM
Will they?

STEVEN
And they can happen again.

Tom, eyes blazing, leaving.

STEVEN
Think on it.

Tom is gone.

ANTE-ROOM - THE DOME

Tom storms in. Angelo at his desk.

Tom ignores him. Goes directly to the steel doors. Bangs a fist on them.

TOM
OPEN UP!

Angelo, flustered, comes after him, pleading -

ANGELO
Sir! Mr. Daniel is occupied.

TOM
He'll be more occupied in a minute. Open up!

ANGELO
Please wait...

TOM
OPEN UP!

ANGELO
(scared)
Certainly, Sir.

Scuttles to the desk. Presses a button. Steel doors slide open.

DOME ROOM

Tom entering. Angelo fussing beyond. Doors hiss closed. Tom, framed against them, seeing -

THE CHAIR

Back to him. ORB side. Glowing. World map spread above. Dome screen pulsating with white globules. Nobody in sight.

DOME ROOM

Tom moving in. To the ORB -

TOM
Turn around!

No response.

In fury he crosses down to address occupant of chair, far side.

TOM
I've met the bad guys. You and your talk about straight talk -

Nobody in chair.

Electronic buzz behind him. He swings around -

Daniel standing at a distance, framed against pulsating white globules on Dome Screen.

DANIEL
You met Steven. Interesting man.

TOM
Interesting? Interesting as hell.

He is drowned out by huge volume of sound - PLAIN CHANT - as sung by monastic monks.

DOME SCREEN

Globules now replaced by cowled monks in procession. In cloisters. Chanting in deep meditation.

TOM
This is a new game?

DANIEL
Used to be Steven's game. Take note. Who's the man, left side, front row?

Tom moves closer to Dome Screen. Sees monk, left side, front row. Enough of him beneath the cowl to be recognized as - Steven. Chanting.

TOM
Holy Steven.

DANIEL
Yes. Some time ago. He used to believe in that. Until he saw the real world.

SOUND. LOUD

Gunfire. Bombs exploding. Screams of agony.

WORLD MAP. ABOVE

Cataclysm of horrendous events from past, present, future. Monstrous images. Hitler is there. Stalin too. Sound reverberating from every direction. World wars 1, 2, 3. Before, beyond. Pivoting Tom on his feet as it shatters his eyes, his ears.

Then suddenly - SILENCE.

White globules, pulsating slowly on Dome Screen. World map above. Now tranquil.

DANIEL
Steven lost the faith. Came here. Brought many people we need with him.

TOM
He's a good guy?

DANIEL
Complicated guy. There's good and evil in all things. In you. In me.

TOM
Thanks for the sermon.

DANIEL
He's a necessary component of our quest. His quest is different.

TOM
Why not get rid of him?

DANIEL
And have civil war?

TOM
Here?

DANIEL
Anywhere.

TOM
He's dangerous.

DANIEL
But he may see the light again.

TOM
He's nuts.

DANIEL
Perhaps.

TOM
You're nuts.

DANIEL
Perhaps.

TOM
Everyone in this place is nuts.

DANIEL
Perhaps. On the surface. Are you nuts at the moment?

TOM
Ready to kill.

DANIEL
So is Steven. We mustn't let him. And you have better things to do.

TOM
Oh, yes. I forgot. I have to save the world.

DANIEL
Yes. What's left of it after one of the other nuts tries to blow it up.

Taps his cane. Globules on Dome Screen now change to what QUEST saw at the beginning in the ocean depths. Other images of his, Tom's, research.

Daniel takes a green file from under the console.

DANIEL
All your research. Up to date. Time to finish it. The real secrets of the deep -
(reading from file)
Quote: 'Methods and Techniques of Underwater Farming in Completely Chemo... chemoauto...'
(stumbles on word)

TOM
(helping Daniel out)
'Chemoautotrophic.'

DANIEL
'Chemoautotrophic' - thank you - 'Chemoautotrophic Environments.' Unquote.
(he closes the file)
With no sunlight available, it's our only hope of survival.

TOM
(ironic)
My ticket to freedom?

DANIEL
When it is done you will have the choice.

TOM
My crew?

DANIEL
(handing over the file)
You will see them when it is done.

Tom takes the file. Still with an eye on the Dome Screen, seeing his discoveries revealed.

TOM
I don't believe in killing.

DANIEL
But you might. Spare me for now.

TOM
For now.

DOME. EXT. NIGHT

Tom, carrying file, walks down steps from door closing of its own accord behind him.

He's suddenly hit by brilliant searchlight beam. Holds up file to obliterate some of it. Moves to his left. Light follows. To his right. It follows.

Only SOUND - LOW - rattle of kettle drum.

TOM
(yelling at light source)
Having fun, guys?

He heads directly at the source - blinding white ORB. Out of it emerges a silhouette, passing by him, saluting, saying -

SILHOUETTE
(in Chinese)
Be seeing you.

Another silhouette, doing the same.

SILHOUETTE 2
(in Syriac)
Be seeing you.

Yet another

SILHOUETTE 3
(in American)
Be seeing you.

TOM
You betcha!

He's nearing the source of light. SOUND of kettle drum building in volume.

Searchlight goes out.

Moment of blackness. Then other lights from above revealing -

SQUARE. EXT. NIGHT

Where the chessboard used to be - a DANCE FLOOR.

Tom in the middle of it. Alone.

Surrounded on all sides by tables, each with its own subdued potted romantic candle. Seated - couples, threesomes, foursomes. Merrily conversing. Attired in traditional or formal dress.

George & Helga, in their best. Ivan, as Hussar Officer. Lee, garbed appropriately.

ATTENDANTS, male & female, flit here and there serving refreshments.

Dais with band. Microphone.

Placard on stand -

DINNER DANCE IN SUPPORT OF
OLD FOLKS HOME

PATRON - STEVEN GOODMAN

At the microphone - the compère - Aubrey - in white tie and tails.

AUBREY
And now for your enjoyment, a little something in the mood of the evening.
(turns to band leader)
Ready Carlos? And, one, two, three, four -

The band goes into: THE BLUE DANUBE.

Tom chuckles at the bizarreness of it all.

Couples drift onto the floor, dancing, surrounding him, smiling as they drift by. Through them he sees Ruth and Steven seated at one of the tables, talking.

Steven, noticing Tom, rises and waves at him.

STEVEN
Over here, Thomas.

Tom wends his way across the floor to Steven's table.

STEVEN
Good to see you again so soon. You know Ruth Cunningham, of course. Waiting for you, we were.

TOM
Many apologies. I got delayed catching up on my work.

Steven indicates the file.

STEVEN
Ah, ha! Moonlighting! Life-saving work. I envy you. But it's intense, isn't it? A little break can refresh the mind. Why don't you join us?

Ruth, watching the two.

TOM
Is this another noble cause? Or are you insuring your place at The Old Folks Home?

STEVEN
(smiling)
With your help, that won't be necessary. Care for a drink or would you like to dance?

TOM
I thought you'd never ask.

STEVEN
Very very good. I must remember 'I thought you'd never ask.'

Ruth, rising. To Tom -

RUTH
Would you like to dance?

The BLUE DANUBE waltz louder now.

TOM
Rock and roll is more my line. Being a sailor, it gets to you. You have no choice in a force 7 gale.

RUTH
This is the lull before the storm.

TOM
Let's give it a whirl.

He moves with her onto the dance floor.

STEVEN
Have fun.

DANCE FLOOR

Tom & Ruth waltzing. He, holding her with one hand. The other, holding the file to his chest.

TOM
Is this getting between us?

RUTH
I hope not.

TOM
Whaddya hear? Whaddya say?

RUTH
Same old things.

ANGLE

Steven, watching them, enigmatic. Looks up. Full moon above. Now detaching from it another moonlike thing - ORB. Descending. Hovering benignly. Steven appears uncomfortable at sight of it. Rises and leaves into the darkness.

DANCE FLOOR

Tom & Ruth. Tom, seeing Steven's discomfiture and exit, looks up.

TOM
How about that? Two moons.

RUTH
Better than none.

TOM
So, Miss Ruth Cunningham. Is it Miss?

RUTH
It's a Miss.

TOM
Still servicing me?

RUTH
There are better ways of putting it. I'm a willing servant.

TOM
Whose?

RUTH
Meaning?

TOM
Who assigned you to me? Sneaky Steven or Devious Daniel?

RUTH
I might have volunteered.

TOM
That's devious.

RUTH
Some assignments are better than others.

TOM
I bet you say that to all the boys.

RUTH
You're my first.

They waltz awhile, quietly. He takes the hand with the file from between them and now places it behind her back. It brings them closer. She leans in, head to head. Whispers in his ear.

RUTH
I report to Steven.

TOM
Why are you here?

RUTH
Hostage. Related to someone of importance. If I don't obey, we're in trouble.

TOM
Who's the someone?

Looks at her watch.

RUTH
Good Heavens! The chicken is done.

She breaks away, into the night.

TOM
(calling after her)
What chicken?

Her voice, calling back.

RUTH
Ours.

Tom, on the dance floor. Still. Pondering. Couples gyrate around him.

CONTROL ROOM. NIGHT

Less activity. Night shift. One OPERATOR in Telephone Section. No one in Lab. Three ATTENDANTS at monitors.

Steven at CONTROL SCREEN. Seeing Tom leaving dance floor.

Steven presses button on console below screen. New image - the two 'Moons' now revealed. One of them pulsating. Again, Steven uncomfortable. Presses button. Screen goes blank.

He walks to steel doors which open of their own accord. Goes through into corridor.

CORRIDOR

Doors close behind him with an exaggerated SOUND as exhalation of breath. At the far end a sign -

ENTRANCE
EXIT

One wall of the corridor - shining steel. The other wall - panels of mirrors, floor to ceiling.

Steven approaches. pauses half way down. Takes a device from a pocket. Aims it at the doors he came through. Presses a button. HEAR the clunk of locks closing. He aims the device at the ENTRANCE EXIT sign. That same sound again.

He stands before one of mirror panels. Intones Plain Chant. Panel opens. He goes through into OTHER CORRIDOR. Panel closes behind him.

OTHER CORRIDOR

Very different place. Walls of dank rock. Mist rising. Dim green light. Steep pathway down branching into two tunnels. Left and right.

Steven takes the right, walking on a mossy plateau leading to a GROTTO. Gurgling sounds.

GROTTO

At plateau edge, he looks down.

BELOW

A pool of what looks like oil. In the center of it a half-submerged round thing. Black. Slimy. Pulsating.

Steven falls on his knees.

TOM'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT

Domestic scene. Tom & Ruth. Seated at the dining table eating chicken. She pouring wine. Nice background music playing. Fire merrily burning. Candlelight.

RUTH
It's free range.

TOM
What?

RUTH
The chicken.

TOM
Free?

RUTH
Haven't you seen the farm?
We believe in health here.
Everything is fresh, natural
food. Nothing to poison the
system.
(she holds up the
bottle of wine)
From our vineyard.
Chateauneuf du Village.
Beautiful design on the
label.

She proffers the bottle. He takes a look.

TOM
Nice.

RUTH
It's special. Done by a local artist. Look at the detail.

He takes the bottle. Examines the label.

BOTTLE LABEL

It is, indeed, well done. But there is handwriting over it. He reads -

WE ARE BEING WATCHED.

Without reaction, he hands back the bottle.

TOM
Quite an artist.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven enters from the corridor. Looking content, purged perhaps. We HEAR Tom and Ruth's voices continuing their conversation.

Last of Control Room staff leaving. Steven alone. Looking at the screen.

SCREEN

Showing Tom and Ruth in the house.

RUTH
(referring to background music)
Music alright? Shall I change it to something else?

TOM
Don't change a thing.

RUTH
As long as you're happy.

TOM
I'm happy.

STEVEN
(to himself)
She's good. She's very good.

DOME

Daniel. Watching his screen. Seeing the same thing. And Steven watching it.

He presses Console button.

DANIEL
Steven!

Steven turns, looks directly forward. At Daniel.

Behind Steven, continuing on Control Screen, see Tom rising from the table with glass of wine. Sits in chair by fireplace.

STEVEN
Yes, Daniel.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven seeing Daniel in Dome. CROSSCUT.

DANIEL
Playing your dangerous games again?

STEVEN
But she is good, isn't she?

DANIEL
I hope so. In the best sense of the word.

STEVEN
Good and evil. Still confused aren't you? He's not sure either.

DANIEL
I think you underestimate him.

STEVEN
You expect too much.

DANIEL
Time will tell.

STEVEN
Keep the faith.

DANIEL
I shall. Goodnight, Steven.

STEVEN
Goodnight, Daniel.

TOM'S HOUSE

He, apparently relaxed, by the fire. Sipping the glass of wine.

Table cleared. All tidy.

RUTH'S VOICE
Tom. May I show you.

TOM
Where are you?

RUTH'S VOICE
In the bedroom.

TOM
On my way.

BEDROOM

Bed turned down. Both sides. Ruth beside open closet doors, showing an array of clothes.

Tom enters.

RUTH
All you need is here. Your size.

TOM
I wonder why.

She closes closet doors. Fluffs the bed pillows.

RUTH
Anything else?

TOM
Yes.

He moves closer to her.

TOM
I need to thank you for a lovely evening.

RUTH
Everything OK?

TOM
Yes.

She kisses him gently on the cheek. They look at each other.

TOM
You OK?

RUTH
Yes.

TOM
Goodnight Ruth.

RUTH
Goodnight Tom.

She leaves him alone. Pondering.

TOM'S HOUSE. EXT. NIGHT

Ruth getting into her Mini-moke. Driving away into the Village.

TOM'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT

He's at the console. Going through the green file. Flipping pages, faster and faster.

TOM
Everything. Everything I ever did. They have everything.

In a wild moment, he erupts. Violently sweeps console clear: files, binders, whatever.

They scatter on the floor.

VILLAGE. EXT. NIGHT

Evening activity. Tom's passionate voice echoing over all.

TOM
WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT OF ME?

Ivan, skating, hearing it. Stops. Looks up.

We see ORB hovering high above Tom's house in the night sky.

ORB

It grows larger gradually changing into a brilliant sun, shedding its light on:

VILLAGE. DAY

Idyllic.

Peaceful activity. Four people playing croquet on the lawn. Various others, strolling, chatting. A couple of Mini-mokes quietly going about their business.

SAILOR, swabbing deck of Stone Boat.

On benches, here and there, old folks feeding pigeons. Others reading newspapers. Etcetera.

Daniel, walking across the square toward the DOME, pausing to say hello now and again. Someone shows him an article in the newspaper. He laughs and moves on. George returning in his car from somewhere and parking it outside the Store.

JOGGERS, as ever.

Lee, on skates, reading a newspaper. Ivan, on skates, practicing turns around Lee.

Over all, the SOUND of the song -

'Stormy weather
Can't keep
My poor self
Together'

ANGLE

Aubrey, on tricycle, approaching Helga's restaurant. Parks the machine outside. Greets Helga, who is in full flood miming along with her 'Stormy Weather' tape. Aubrey, dueting with her, sits down, as she prepares his morning refreshment.

Helga sees something at the far side of the Square. Taps Aubrey's shoulder, bringing his attention to it. Still in duet - 'that man and I ain't together.' They smile and wave.

ANGLE

Tom, coming out his front door, sees them, and waves back.

TOM

Taking in the panorama below. A new day. But what's new?

Then he sees it - the KAR. Parked nearby. Inviting. Goes to it. Key in ignition. He ponders a moment. Gets in.

VILLAGE SQUARE

Daniel turning, seeing Tom entering KAR. Pleased. Expecting this to happen. He continues on his way.

KAR

Tom starts engine. Puts it in gear. Releases brake. Drives away. Slowly.

VILLAGE

KAR proceeding. At leisurely pace through Village activities.

PASSING DOME

Daniel, about to enter front door, turns, sees Tom, waves. Tom waves back. Daniel goes inside.

PASSING HELGA'S

She's still working on 'can't go on, everything I had is gone, stormy weather.' She alone. No Aubrey. She waves.

PASSING VILLAGE STORE

George assisting Ruth with two bags of groceries into her Mini-moke. Tom slows to stop beside it.

GEORGE
(to Tom)
Nice day.

TOM
Perfect.

GEORGE
Enjoy. Be seeing you.
Everything OK, Ruth?

RUTH
Just fine. Thanks, George.

GEORGE
Take care. See you.

RUTH
You too.

With a wave and a smile he departs into Store.

TOM
(to Ruth)
Good morning.

RUTH
Isn't it?

TOM
Just cruisin' around.

RUTH
Nice day for it.

TOM
What's for lunch?

RUTH
Surprise.

TOM
My favorite dish.

RUTH
You'll like it.

TOM
If I'm not there, start
without me.

RUTH
Maybe.

TOM
'Bye for now.

He drives on. She, in Mini-moke, takes off in the other direction.

KAR continues toward beach.

BEACH

KAR descending ramp onto sand. Slowly.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven & Aubrey. Watching Tom's progress on Control Screen.

AUBREY
I do hope he's alright. All that stress, you know.

STEVEN
Why? Why is he being so quiet? No rebellion. That's the worry.

BEACH

KAR moves to where we first saw it. It appears that Tom is trying to find the exact spot from where he tried his escape in the thing. Some manoeuvering is required until he's satisfied.

TOM

He sits there a moment. Engine purring. Looks left. The Village above. Looks right - Ocean.

Looks ahead - endless beach.

He revs engine a couple of times.

CONTROL ROOM

They are watching.

STEVEN
What's he up to? Trying again?

AUBREY
What a lad! That's not the way to do it, laddie.

BEACH

KAR hurtling by at full throttle into a speck beyond.

UNDERWATER

Deep. Bubble rising. Churning. Changing texture. Into ORB.

BEACH

KAR, moving even faster, coming from distant speck to huge.

SEAWATER

ORB erupting, scudding across surface.

KAR. TRAVELLING

Tom, looking ahead. Tenses.

BEACH

ORB, at some distance, moving into position. Lurking. KAR headed directly at it.

KAR

Tom turns steering wheel left, right. No response. Shifts gears. No change. He takes his hands from the wheel. Holds them up as if in surrender.

Almost upon ORB, now quivering, when engine slows and KAR turns.

Turns back.

BEACH

ORB, ten feet behind, herds KAR across beach toward Village.

ORB

As if from its point of view - Tom leaps from KAR. Stands confronting ORB. KAR continues on.

CONTROL ROOM

AUBREY
Extraordinary.

STEVEN
He's crazy.

BEACH

ORB, quivering, moves closer to Tom. He doesn't budge.

DOME

Daniel watching beach activity on his screen. He moves in for a closer look. Absorbed.

BEACH

ORB, pulsating now. Grows. Expands. Twice the height of Tom. He doesn't budge.

It's a standoff. The huge white ORB. Tom looking into the heart of it.

TOM
We met once before, didn't we?

ORB, pulsating more. Turning a slight pink.

TOM
Maybe twice. What do you say, baby? Down there. In the lower depths. When things were going woozy. Was that you? Are you a mystery of the deep?

ORB'S pink is turning quivering red. Groaning sounds within. Tom extracts a small Swiss Army knife from pants pocket. Unhinges the pick device. Holds it up.

TOM
See this? Sharp as a pin. Do you like pins?

He takes a step forward, holding it in front of him.

ORB. Now blood red.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven & Aubrey watching screen. Zig zags of red shoot across it. There is commotion all around. Workers watching monitors. Confused. Their screens similarly affected.

STEVEN
He's out of his mind.

AUBREY
He's on the edge.

BEACH

ORB. Deadly still. Tom, moving in on it.

TOM
Try this for size.

He lunges the pick into ORB.

A terrible unearthly roar.

Tom, as if hit by a cannonball, flung away.

Falling flat on the sand. Looking up.

Above him. hovering, descending. ORB. Red. Bleeding drops of blood from the pinprick wound.

TOM

Looking up. A drop of blood falls on his face.

ORB moves inexorably down. Enveloping.

TOM IS WITHIN IT

As in a womb. Whirled around in turmoil. Bathed in red. Then the red washed clean by white, as milk. Then that washed away by fierce sprays of seawater.

NIGHT

Tom on the ocean. In a sailing boat. A gale of monstrous proportions lashing it. Howling winds. Towering waves. Black sky.

Thunder. Lightning. The mast cracks. Falls away. A wall of water floods the deck.

He's struggling with the steering. To no avail. A massive wave nearly gets him. He hangs onto the steering for dear life. Bigger wave coming down.

That'll do it. He's gone. The boat's gone. Life is gone. And he knows it.

TOM
Oh, God.

Suddenly all is calm. The seas subside. The winds cease. The black clouds break.

He sees the night sky above.

Stars in their firmament.

And a moon.

But is it a moon? Is it pulsating?

TOM

Exhausted. Looking up in wonderment. At the moon.

Or is it?

Changing now into pulsating sun. Brilliant shafts of light from it momentarily blind him. Then:

It's day -

ON A BEACH

Tom. Lying half-conscious on sand. Seawater lapping at his feet.

SUN

Burning. Low. Late afternoon.

Tom's silhouette, rising painfully, sun's rays spilling either side of him.

Then another silhouette - the back of a head - intrudes to one side of the image.

DOME

See that we are watching this on Daniel's screen. The silhouette head is his.

DANIEL
(to himself)
Good for you, Tom. Now you know why you were saved. And, now, I hope, you know why you have to stay.

CONTROL ROOM

That screen. Red zig-zags image, fading out.

Image of Tom, going unsteadily toward the sun, fading in.

Steven & Aubrey watching.

STEVEN
What do you suppose happened, Aubrey?

AUBREY
It appears he saw the light.

STEVEN
It appears he lost the game.

AUBREY
I wonder.

STEVEN
What did you say?

AUBREY
(apparently servile)
I wonder. Why he lost the game.

STEVEN
(who treats Aubrey as a lackey. Aubrey detests him, but can't show it.)
Go tell that niece of yours to pick him up. Bring him to the Meeting Place. Stage Entrance.

AUBREY
Absolutely.

Aubrey exits Control Room.

CONTROL ROOM SCREEN

Tom, on the beach. A speck in the distance, moving toward the setting sun.

STEVEN

Seeing this. Pleased. Buttons Control Console.

STEVEN
All residents report to the Meeting Place. Immediately.

VILLAGE

Wide angle. General activity. STEVEN'S VOICE echoing from every direction.

STEVEN'S VOICE
Repeat! All residents report to the Meeting Place. Immediately. A matter of great interest to all. Immediately!

Villagers stop whatever they are doing. Proceed toward a large building near The Dome.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven turns to his minions.

STEVEN
Prepare to welcome back our friend - Professor Thomas Yates. You know what you have to do.

Four of them go quickly out.

DOME

Daniel seeing all this on his screen. Buttons Console.

CONTROL ROOM

That screen. Huge head of Daniel.

DANIEL
Well, well. You're going all the way?

DOME

Daniel's screen. Huge head of Steven. CROSSCUT.

STEVEN
You've lost him. You expected too much. Your gamble didn't pay off.

DANIEL
We'll see.

STEVEN
He wasn't as strong as you thought. Are you joining us?

DANIEL
I'll be there.

VILLAGE

Aubrey puffing up hill toward Tom's House. Ruth coming out. Closing door. Hurrying down. They meet.

RUTH
What's the fuss?

AUBREY
Pick him up.

RUTH
Where is he?

AUBREY
In the wilderness.

He looks toward the beach. She sees -

TOM

Tom, far away, increasing his pace toward the disappearing sun.

AUBREY & RUTH

RUTH
What happened?

AUBREY
He's in a bad way. Bring him to the Meeting Place. Stage Entrance.

RUTH
Why?

AUBREY
Steven's playing his games.

She runs back to Tom's House. Mini-moke parked outside.

AUBREY

Looks after her. Then at the beach. Concerned.

BEACH

Closer on Tom. Proceeding, mumbling to himself, as if lost in the desert. Sun, a mere sliver, about to disappear.

He sees something. Stops.

ANGLE

Mini-moke. As in a mirage, a speck approaching across the sand.

TOM

Yells. Sinks exhausted to his knees.

MINI-MOKE. TRAVELLING

Ruth at the wheel. Seeing him beyond.

BEACH

In the far distance, we see Mini-moke arriving beside Tom. She helps him into it. Whatever is said, if anything, too far away for us to hear.

MINI-MOKE. INT.

Tom, slumped in the seat beside her, bemused, childlike, puts an arm around her shoulder.

TOM
Are we going home?

RUTH
(looking at him with tender care)
Not yet.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven and Aubrey. Watching this moment onscreen.

STEVEN
Aha! There we have it.

AUBREY
Have what?

STEVEN
They've fallen for each other. Can't you see? That's our insurance policy.

AUBREY
Jolly good.

BEACH

Sun sinks below horizon. Replaced by red ORB, rising, changing gradually to white. It sweeps benignly above Mini-moke travelling across sand to the Village. Then ORB descends from sight behind THE DOME.

VILLAGE ALLEYWAY. DUSK

Mini-moke arriving outside doorway. Steps leading up. She assists Tom to navigate them. Door opens. They go in.

MEETING PLACE

Stage Entrance. Ruth guides him through bits and pieces of scenery. Props. Costumes hanging. Weird shapes. Short nightmare walk to Stage. Bright lights awaiting there.

STAGE

Ruth eases him onto it. She remains in the wings.

Tom arrives stage center. Finds himself surrounded by placards on stands. One of them, prominent center, bearing the legend: ANTI-AGING FOR ALL. PROFESSOR YATES TO THE RESCUE.

Other placards depicting age graphs. Longevity in various countries. Diet charts.

Huge photograph of hale and hearty Oriental - underneath it: AGE 127.

And other relevant displays.

Tom tries to take this in. But, still woozy, he looks out into the blackness of the auditorium. Because of the fierce lights burning down on him, it is a dark abyss. Until suddenly there's a huge burst of applause. Some cheers. Then the whole place is lit up, revealing -

AUDITORIUM

It's packed. Everyone seen before is there. Aubrey in the front row surrounded by Steven's mantra friends. Not in their Mao outfits, but recognizable. One vacant seat, front row center.

George, Helga, Ivan, Lee, all there.

Daniel comes through the main entrance and quietly stands to the left side of the doors.

STAGE

At the height of applause, Steven enters stage right. Goes to Tom. Shakes his hand. Tom, still somewhat disoriented, accepts it. Steven turns to address the audience.

STEVEN
Here is a man who needs no introduction. He is our future. He has discovered the secret of longevity. And he is now ready to share that secret with us. Professor Thomas Yates.

AUDITORIUM

Steven leaves Tom and walks from the stage down steps into the auditorium. Signals the gathering to silence. Takes his place in center front row seat. Waits expectantly.

STAGE

Tom, still bemused, looking at the graphs and charts around him, uncertainly begins to talk.

TOM
Yes... You can live longer... There are ways to do it... Diet. Exercise. Abstinence.

He's unsteady on his feet. Steven watching.

TOM
With those alone, you can extend your life - perhaps for not as long as you'd wish...
(gradually becoming more focused)
But science can help us live to an unnatural old age. A hundred years beyond the norm. Or more.

WINGS

Ruth, listening. Enigmatic. She leaves.

TOM
But that is not the answer.
(he is steadier on his feet by now)
If you want to be immortal. To live forever. You can do what the great artists did. The great composers. The great statesmen. By your acts of creation, you set an example for the future.

ANGLE

Steven. Watching. Not sure where this is going.

Ruth comes through the main entrance. She and Daniel exchange glances as she moves and stands to the right side of the doors, watching Tom onstage.

TOM
Raise a family. To be decent. Decent.

If there was a smile on Steven's face before, it's getting tighter.

Tom now has a stillness about him.

TOM
It's simple. Beget children. Bring them up. Don't screw 'em up. Give them a break. Give them a vision. If they have that, it would be stupid of them -
(looking at Steven)
to want to live forever in this life instead of the other.

Daniel exchanges a look with Ruth. Steven's eyes are hardening. The audience unsure.

Tom, now hypnotically quiet:

TOM
Strange, isn't it? I haven't seen any children here. Interesting.

Daniel. Amused.

TOM
Why are you here? Most of you don't know, do you? Why am I here? I'm not sure either. But with the help of Jesus, Buddha, Allah or Moses, we'll find out together. Are you in the telephone directory? Do you know your God's number? Give him a call. Talk to him.

AUDITORIUM

Steven has had enough. With artificial enthusiasm, he's on his feet, applauding. The confused audience follows suit. After a couple of moments, Steven signals them to silence.

STEVEN
Well done, Thomas. I wish to extend thanks for an enlightening talk. And bring this meeting to a close.

He turns abruptly and followed by his clan heads up the center aisle to the exit.

As STEVEN passes DANIEL on the way out -

DANIEL
Good show.

STEVEN
You haven't seen the last act.

And he's gone. His group hot on his heels. The rest of the audience beginning to wander out, some of them whispering to each other.

RUTH watching TOM leaving the stage. She turns quickly and pushes her way through the crowd to the exit, having to pass close to Daniel.

DANIEL
(to Ruth)
Good luck.

RUTH
Yes.

She's out the door.

ALLEYWAY

TOM descends steps from stage entrance. Mini-moke outside. He gets in, passenger side. Ruth runs from far end of alley to join him.

RUTH
Where to?

CUT TO:

SHOWER HEAD

Spraying water on Tom. He's singing. For some reason happy.

TOM
'Pack up all my care and woe
Here I go singing low
Bye Bye Blackbird
Where somebody waits for me
Sugar's sweet, so is she
Bye Bye Blackbird.'

DOME

Onscreen Daniel watches as Ruth listens to the song and then interrupts her dinner preparations, heading for the bedroom.

SHOWER

TOM
'No one here can love and
understand me
Oh what hardluck stories
they all hand me' -

CONTROL ROOM

Aubrey. Alone. Watching the screen as Ruth enters Tom's bedroom. She goes to the closet. She reaches for a dark brown bathrobe on a hanger.

SHOWER

TOM
'Make my bed and light the
light
I'll arrive late tonight
Blackbird bye bye.'
(calling out)
Are you there?

BEDROOM

Ruth removing bathrobe from hanger as she walks past the open bathroom door beyond. Seeing Tom in shower cubicle.

RUTH
I'm here.

TOM
I have a question.

As they speak Ruth carefully, almost ritualistically, lays the robe on the bed, spreading its arms and revealing a hood.

CONTROL ROOM

Aubrey watching this prodedure onscreen. Knowing why she has to do it.

BEDROOM

RUTH
What is it?

TOM
Ruth.

RUTH
Yes?

TOM
Are you ruthless?

RUTH
I try not to be.

TOM
Good.

RUTH
Any more questions?

TOM
What's to eat?

RUTH
Spaghetti.

TOM
With what?

RUTH
With everything.

TOM
I can't wait.

ART GALLERY

Steven and his group in Mao jackets. Gathered in deep meditation. Mantra at work. Ivan coming up to pitch.

DOME

Daniel watching this onscreen.

ART GALLERY

Mantra ceases. Steven and his guys and dolls don monk robes.

TOM'S HOUSE

Kitchen. Tom. Wearing bathrobe. Joins Ruth at stove.

She removes spaghetti from saucepan. Drains it. Ladles it onto two plates.

He picks up spoon. Samples sauce.

TOM
Not bad. You're a good cook.

RUTH
Thank you kind sir.

TOM
You must have been in service before. Does Steven like pasta?

RUTH
Not with everything. I think the sauce needs a drop of wine.
(she gestures toward bottle nearby)
Would you, please?

He takes it. Already opened. Pours a drop or two.

TOM
Enough?

RUTH
A touch more.

He adds the touch more. Wondering why. Then notices:

BOTTLE LABEL WITH HANDWRITTEN MESSAGE:

STAY IN TONIGHT - DANGER!

TOM & RUTH

TOM
I hope we're not overdoing it.

RUTH
Enough is enough.

TOM
You can say that again.

DOME

Daniel watching this onscreen.

Presses Console button.

TOM'S HOUSE

Suddenly a VOICE. LOUD.

VOICE
Quest goes on. The new Quest.

Tom turns. Startled.

Sees TV self-activated with head of Interviewer onscreen. Looking directly at him. Same Interviewer previously seen with his crew.

TV. INSERT

Blueprint of newly designed version of QUEST. Hand with pointer indicating its features.

SVEN (VO)
It'll be better. Go deeper. Stay longer. Do more.

INTERVIEWER (VO)
Who'll be in it?

JOE (VO)
We'd all like to go. But Sven's the fittest. I'm of another age. And we don't want to lose Maggie.

MAGGIE (VO)
I'm fit as a fiddle!

JOE (VO)
But not fully tuned yet.

MAGGIE (VO)
Careful what you say!

SHIPYARD

Revealing blueprint is on trestle table. Surrounded by Interviewer and Tom's Crew. Boat building and whatever going on behind.

INTERVIEWER
(snide)
You have a difference of opinion?

SVEN
No way.

JOE
Forget that.

MAGGIE
Never.

INTERVIEWER
Why are you doing it?

JOE
For him.

INTERVIEWER
Professor Yates?

MAGGIE
For Tom.

TOM & SVEN
(together)
Yeah.

TOM

Watching it. Deeply moved.

TV

INTERVIEWER
So, Quest 2 will go deeper, stay longer. And what do you hope to achieve with this new wondercraft?

JOE
Continue the work.

INTERVIEWER
And how would you define the work?

SVEN
Research.

MAGGIE
The truth.

ON TV. INTERVIEWER. LOOKING AT TOM.

INTERVIEWER
Truth. Perfect last word.
Truth. We hope Thomas Yates,
wherever he is, has found it
for himself.

TV CUTS OUT.

Instantly Tom hears LOUD PLAIN CHANT behind him.

Swings around.

The three screens on ARK console now alive.

CENTER SCREEN

CLOSE SHOT of tombstone on top of which is a replica of QUEST. Chiseled into the tombstone the legend:

THOMAS YATES
BORN 1957. DIED - ?

LEFT SCREEN

We see group of cowled Monks carrying the thing.

RIGHT SCREEN

CLOSER, with bowed heads, two Monks heading the group. We see a glimpse of Steven and Ivan beneath their cowls.

Plain Chant stops. Monks disappear. Replaced on the screens by Village commercials. Promoting them: Lee, George, Helga.

CENTER SCREEN

LEE
The Village Lawn - the best
place to be laid to rest.

LEFT SCREEN

GEORGE
Is your life insurance
policy up to date?

RIGHT SCREEN

HELGA
Our funeral home is a real home.

TOM AND RUTH

RUTH
You're not dead yet.

TOM
Not yet.
(in passionate rage, yells at the walls, at the ceiling)
CAN YOU SEE ME? CAN YOU HEAR ME? You sent her to tempt me. How about this?

He turns on Ruth. Embraces her. Kisses her. And steps back.

TOM
(still yelling at the walls and ceiling)
SATISFIED?

The console screens instantly go blank.

SILENCE.

Ruth and Tom look at each other. In a different way. He takes a step toward her.

THEN: huge volume of Plain Chant OUTSIDE the house.

Tom goes to window. Sees:

TOM'S HOUSE. EXT. NIGHT

Monks chanting, carrying tombstone with QUEST replica just seen, walk up pathway toward the house.

The tombstone appears to be heavy. The bearers need to rest. Apparently.

They lay it on the ground. Fifteen yards below the house. Four Monks, bearing lanterns, surround tombstone. Deliberately illuminating it.

Plain Chant grows in volume.

TOM'S HOUSE. INT.

Tom turns from window. Looks at Ruth standing nervously at a distance.

He walks toward her raising hood of bathrobe over his head.

They look at each other.

TOM'S HOUSE. EXT. NIGHT

Monks. They heft the tombstone shoulder high. Proceed past the house. Chanting.

As the tailender goes by, another COWLED FIGURE emerges from the shadows to join them: TOM.

DOME

Daniel looking at Monk procession onscreen as it crosses Village Square.

TOM'S HOUSE. EXT.

Ruth, at window. Also watching.

VILLAGE

Monks approach the archway leading to Steven's Art Gallery.

DOME

Daniel. Losing sight of Monks as they enter Archway. Their image onscreen replaced by gyrating white globules. He turns away and paces in deep thought.

ARCHWAY

Monks arrive outside door leading to Steven's Art Gallery. They don't enter.

They turn.

They turn to a blank stone wall on opposite side. Pause in front of it.

Now the Chant changes. To one not heard before. It grows in volume.

The new Chant causes a slab of the wall to swing open. Dark corridor beyond.

They go through. Tom at the tail.

Slab swings shut.

DARK CORRIDOR

Illuminated only by Monks' lanterns as they pass through. Chanting.

They come to a rocky ramp leading down. Dank stone walls.

At bottom of ramp - an intersection.

Three tunnels off it. They proceed into tunnel on the left.

Tom, at the rear, pausing to take in the place, is momentarily left behind. He hurries to catch up.

But a slab of rock thumps into place closing entrance to left tunnel leaving him. Alone.

Chant stops abruptly.

Silence.

Tom. In darkness. For a second. Then a glow of green light from the right tunnel. Gurgling sound within.

He approaches entrance that leads to source of light, now somewhat brighter. Gurgling sound louder.

Then the Chant heard again. Deep within right tunnel. He goes in. Into green light. Toward the Chant.

Onto a mossy rock plateau. To the edge. To a grotto.

GROTTO

He looks down. Sees a pool of black that looks like oil. Bubbling. A black, slimy, orblike thing half-submerged. Throbbing.

Beyond it, on another rock plateau, his tombstone and QUEST replica standing. Inviting.

Chant builds to crescendo.

BLACK ORB growing. Emerging. Quivering.

MONSTROUS SOUNDS.

The earth seems to tremble.

Tom hypnotized.

TOM'S HOUSE

Kitchen. Ruth. Nervously repolishing an aleady-spotless counter. The earth trembles. She's suddenly stricken by dizziness. Hands to her head.

DOME

Daniel, pacing, also feels the effect of the same thing. On his screen, white globules now intermingled with black. In turmoil.

VILLAGE. EXT.

Villagers alarmed as if by an impending earthquake. They look up at a foreboding sky.

DOME EXT.

WHITE ORB rises from behind the Dome and hurtles up into the night. Hovering above. Waiting.

GROTTO

Tom. Hypnotized.

The satanic BLACK ORB erupts. Unearthly roar. It envelops him.

Now he is within it.

Spun around in whirling green black -

Flickering flame -

Turning into fragmented lights -

Turning into bubbles rising -

OCEAN. DAY

Bubbles breaking surface. Followed by QUEST emerging from the deep. Adjacent to ARK. Starboard side.

ARK. EXT. DAY

(PHOTOGRAPHED IN SLIGHTLY UNREAL FASHION)

Derrick above. Grappling arms lower, latch efficiently to QUEST. Raise it from water. Gently settle it on deck. The exit hatch opens.

Tom - prone within. He gets out.

His crew, Joe, Maggie, Sven, awaiting him.

TOM
Hi, gang. You'll never believe what I've just seen!

MONTAGE

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES:

(1) THOMAS YATES HAS THE ANSWER

(2) FUTURE IN THE DEEP BY YATES

(3) YATES CLIMBS EVEREST ALL THE WAY DOWN

(4) PROFESSOR YATES DISCOVERS HARVEST OF THE FUTURE

DOCKSIDE

ARK approaching. Enthusiastic crowd waiting, welcoming. Cameras, newspeople, at the ready.

Tom and his Crew wave as they come in.

NEW YORK

TICKER TAPE PARADE

Tom standing in open car, his Crew with him. Surrounded by cheering crowds.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Honorary degree bestowed on Tom. Again his Crew in evidence behind him.

TV. CNN

LARRY KING & TOM.

LARRY
Was it tough?

TOM
It was deep.

THEATRE

Opera. AIDA. Last moments of it.

Curtain falls.

Entire audience stands, applauding. But not the opera. They have turned to the Royal Box where Tom is taking a bow.

MAGAZINE COVERS

Tom everywhere: TIME. NEWSWEEK. A particularly seductive shot of him with QUEST in VANITY FAIR.

WHITE HOUSE. DAY

ROSE GARDEN. They're all there. Important people. BAND playing. Honor Guard. Tom descending from Presidential helicopter onto red carpet.

He is applauded as he walks the carpet to dais where the President and First Lady await.

Much-decorated Marine sergeant arrives beside Tom. He carries cushion bearing medal on a chain. Comes to attention. The medal is star-shaped with sharp points.

Then: IN SLOW MOTION - The President takes medal from cushion and starts to place it around Tom's neck.

THE ATMOSPHERE CHANGES.

Only light seen is glinting on medal. Until we reveal that this is now happening in the Grotto.

GROTTO

Tom is dressed in black Mao jacket.

The medal around his neck. The hands that placed it there belong to Steven.

There he is. BLACK ORB, behind him, sinking into its quagmire.

All satanically peaceful.

Steven shakes Tom's hand.

STEVEN
You have arrived.

Tom's other hand fondles the medal.

TOM
It's been quite a trip.

STEVEN
But you're here.

TOM
And I'm ready.

He is now a different man. Victim of fame and fortune. Arrogant. Quietly deadly.

DOME. INT.

Daniel. Seeing on his screen: WHITE ORB descending from night sky. It scuds across the village, sinking behind the Dome.

Daniel smiles.

DANIEL
You are still with us.

TOM'S HOUSE

Ruth goes to the closet. Lays out pyjamas on the bed. Looks out window. Normal village activity. Then to the kitchen. Starts preparing meal.

TUNNEL ADJACENT TO GROTTO

It's long. Caves within it. Carved out of rock. Both sides. Each cave with bars enclosing it as in a jail.

At the far end: a laboratory. White-coated technicians monitoring progress on a battery of screens.

Steven is showing Tom around.

STEVEN
We can't be observed down here. Daniel has his private domain and I have mine.

TOM
This your hobby?

STEVEN
Yes, indeed. Long life. Take a look.

He leads Tom to Cave One. Behind the bars, a magnificent gorilla. Silverback. Prowling within. It stops when it sees Steven and stares balefully at him.

STEVEN
This is Henry. Oldest known gorilla on the face of the earth. We feed him a diet that he's not used to. But he'll thank me in the end. He'll live twenty years beyond the norm.

Henry rushes at the bars, grabs them, shakes them. Lets forth a roar. Never taking his eyes off Steven.

TOM
He doesn't seem too happy.

STEVEN
Who's happy? I'll show you.

They move on to Cave Two. A very different image:

Half a dozen nubile maidens comfortably accomodated. Their cave lined with silken drapes, couches, all that a harem would require. They wear slinky long see-through garments and are wandering about in a vacant-eyed haze.

Desirable perhaps, if you rid them of the electrodes attached to their shaven heads.

TOM
Interesting.

STEVEN
How old do you think they are?

TOM
About twenty to twenty-five.

STEVEN
The youngest is thirty-nine. You see. Already we're beginning to make it work. All we need is for you to finish the job. Do you like worms?

TOM
When I was young. When I went fishing.

STEVEN
Look at these babies.

They move on to Cave Three. At the far end, four glass containers. Above each, a large illuminated screen. Squirming images.

STEVEN
They've been around a long time. My people are doing an intensive study. Worms, ants, cockroaches. You can't get rid of them. There has to be a reason. A lot more to show you but it can wait. There's one obstacle in our way. Daniel. What do you think of him?

TOM
Interesting.

STEVEN
Interesting? As hell. He's a killer.

TOM
That surprises me.

STEVEN
Watch this.

He turns abruptly and heads out the tunnel.

CONTROL ROOM

Aubrey at the screen. Monitoring village activities. Ivan lurking to one side. Steven and Tom enter from the steel doors.

STEVEN
(to Aubrey)
Bring up Daniel's file. Section 16. Item 47.

AUBREY
Coming right up.

He hits buttons on the Control Console. Instantly on screen: a passionate younger Daniel watching a prone Leo McKern twitching at the moment of death.

YOUNG DANIEL
(on control screen)
DIE! DIE! DIE!

STEVEN
That was his first. A long time ago. There have been many more since. You might be the next.

He takes an automatic pistol from a pocket. Proffers it to Tom.

TOM
Get rid of him.

DOME

Daniel watching this on his screen. Seeing Tom accept the gun.

DANIEL
The time has come.

DOME ANTE-ROOM

CLOSE on a nervous Angelo.

ANGELO
Certainly Sir.

Camera follows him CLOSE to the opening steel doors.

DOME

Daniel remote at a distance. Angelo in the doorway.

ANGELO
Mr. Yates, sir.

DANIEL
Show him in.

ANGELO
(stepping aside)
Mr. Daniel will see you now, sir.

Tom appears in the doorway. Black Mao jacket. Medal around his neck. He takes a few paces in. The doors shut on a retreating Angelo.

TOM
Good evening. Have a nice day?

DANIEL
That depends. I see you're dressed to kill.

TOM
It's the fashion of the future.

DANIEL
Unique medal. Never seen one like it. May I take a look?

TOM
(moving forward)
I earned it.

Daniel, still at a distance.

DANIEL
What's the inscription?

TOM
It may surprise you.

Daniel doesn't move.

DANIEL
Closer, please.

Tom steps close. One hand in a pocket. Daniel reaches out and fingers the medal, reading from it.

DANIEL
"THOMAS YATES. THE GREATEST"

TOM
(grinning wickedly)
Can't do much better than that.

DANIEL
You earned it. Is the condemned man allowed a last wish?

TOM
What do you have in mind?

DANIEL
This.

He taps his cane on the floor. They sink together into it.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven & Aubrey watching.

STEVEN
Damn! We've lost sight of them. What the hell is the matter with that idiot? Why didn't he do it right away?

He paces furiously for a moment. Stops.

STEVEN
Ivan!

Ivan steps forward, bowing.

ELEVATOR SHAFT

Tom & Daniel descending rapidly through steel-enclosed walls.

DANIEL
Did you enjoy the brainwashing?

Tom takes out the gun. Holds it at Daniel's temple.

TOM
Do you like these things?

DANIEL
Never used one.

TOM
No shit.

DANIEL
No shit. Remember. One last wish.

The elevator comes to a stop. Doors slide open, revealing:

A scene very different from Steven's domain. People at work. Tranquil but energetic. Hospital. Library. Gymnasium. Laboratory. A corridor leading through them.

Tom, amazed, moves out. Away from Daniel. Taking it in.

TOM
Jesus! You tricky devil.

He turns back. Daniel has disappeared.

TOM'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Domestic Ruth at work in the kitchen. Hears door open. Moves to welcome Tom. Instead - there stands: Ivan. Smiling.

UNDERGROUND

Tom. Searching for Daniel. Hears his voice from far end of corridor.

DANIEL'S VOICE
This way.

Tom goes in that direction. Gun in hand. Sliding doors open at end of corridor. Revealing:

A vast cavern. A green field. Flourshing crops. Hillock beyond.

TOM
Where are you?

From beyond the hillock:

DANIEL'S VOICE
One last wish.

TOM
You've had it.

DANIEL'S VOICE
Not yet. Come see.

HILLOCK

Tom mounting the crest. Looking down:

Another vast cavern. Stretching far. Water. Water everywhere. Underground ocean. Jetty. Moored at it: the real QUEST.

Tom sees Daniel at water edge, back to him, gazing into the distance.

DANIEL
(not turning)
Most of this was here to be discovered. I added this and that. It took years. You can go out on these waters to the deep ocean and continue experimenting to your heart's content. The choice is yours. Everything you need is before you. Now is the time to shoot. I'm ready.

Tom moves down to join him. Gun in hand,

TOM
You crafty devil!

He hurls the gun into the water.

TOM
Why not before?

DANIEL
You weren't ready. You had to go through it. Come out the other side.

TOM
I should have killed you.

DANIEL
You're free.

He takes out a key, hands it to Tom.

DANIEL
The helicopter. This time it will go where you want it to go.

DOME

Elevator platform rising with the two of them. To floor level.

Beyond: the screen. On it: HUGE HEAD of Steven.

STEVEN
I see you didn't have the guts to do it, Professor. Let's stop futzing around. Take a look.

PULL BACK. See Ruth. In Control Room. Hands bound. Held by Ivan. Aubrey standing helplessly.

STEVEN
She's due to be my latest experiment. I have a nice cage waiting for her.
(to Aubrey)
Activate!

Aubrey punches buttons.

CONTROL ROOM

Steven, with Ivan manhandling Ruth, go through the steel doors into dark corridor.

DOME

TOM & DANIEL.

TOM
Open those damn doors! Where is your Big Brother when we need him?

DANIEL
Have no fear.

He punches buttons on the console. The doors open. Tom hurtles out.

VILLAGE

Normal evening activity. But not for long. WHITE ORB erupts from behind Dome into night sky.

GROTTO

BLACK ORB. With menace. Arising from slime.

CONTROL ROOM

Aubrey alone. Tom bursts in.

TOM
Where is she?

AUBREY
Below.

TOM
Get me in!

VILLAGE

White and Black Orbs. Above. Ready to do battle.

GROTTO

Tom arriving. Seeing Ruth at far side. Tied to a stake. He hears a voice:

VOICE
Hello!

Tom turns. It's Ivan. Ready for action. They fight. Out of the Grotto. Into the corridors.

VILLAGE

All hell is breaking loose. It's the war of the worlds above. Thunder. Lightning. White and Black Orbs in the ultimate conflict.

Daniel. Outside. Looking up at it.

CORRIDOR

Tom and Ivan. Fighting. Now in corridor of Steven's cages.

Ivan has Tom up against the bars of the gorilla's cage. Henry, within, balefully watching. Tom is being throttled to death.

As a last hope, he manages to release the door to Henry's cage. Henry comes out. Roaring. Goes to work on Ivan. It's not pretty.

Tom leaves them to it.

GROTTO

Tom arriving. Seeking Ruth. She's gone.

VILLAGE

All hell above. Orbs still at it. Fight to the death. Lightning, thunder continue. Villagers in turmoil.

AUBREY

Outside. Fearfully watching.

DANIEL

Head bowed. Walking slowly toward the beach.

STEVEN

Dragging Ruth toward the helicopter.

HENRY

Outside. Seeking Steven.

TOM

Outside. Seeing Steven & Ruth in the distance. He sprints toward them.

VILLAGE

War of the worlds is over. A deflated Black Orb descends to earth and bursts into flames.

Thunder and lighning subside.

Victorious White Orb drifts toward the beach.

Aubrey, Villagers, watching, go in that direction.

HELICOPTER

Steven, manhandling Ruth, is almost at it.

HENRY & TOM

Converging on the helicopter. Henry stops. Looks at Tom. As if to say: "He's all yours."

HENRY

Watching as Tom kills Steven.

Henry wanders off into the woods. Free.

HELICOPTER

Tom & Ruth taking off. Free. Going away.

VILLAGE

They are all assembled. Watching the departure.

AUBREY

Happy. Sad.

BEACH

DANIEL. A lonely figure on the sand, with his cane. White Orb descends behind him. Obscuring him. Then it ascends into the night sky.

Daniel has disappeared.

All that remains is his cane. Stuck in the sand.

Villagers. Lost. Look up at the sky.

Then a sound.

Helicopter.

Returning.

It lands.

TOM and Ruth get out.

Tom looks out to sea. A ship is coming to port.

RUTH
That's yours. He always keeps his word.

UPRIGHT CANE IN SAND

Tom and Ruth approaching.

He picks up the cane. It feels good in his hand,

RUTH
It would be nice if there were children here.

TOM
Let's give it a whirl.

They move toward the welcoming village.

NIGHT SKY

Crystal clear. Galaxy of stars. What appears to be a comet shooting from earth into the heavens and coming to rest.

FADE OUT